



## Milsom Place: Finishing Touches

MILSOM PLACE OFFERS EXCITING SHOPPING AND DINING OPPORTUNITIES IN A LIGHTER, BRIGHTER ENVIRONMENT.

**B**ath is gaining a very special shopping area as work draws near to completion on Milsom Place – formerly known as Shires Yard. This distinctive new address for retail therapy combines the best of old and the new in the same way that Thermae Bath Spa combines modern architecture with gracious Georgian buildings.

Created by integrating the Grade I Octagon Chapel into existing retail space and developing brand new shops, the historic fabric of the buildings provides a contrast to the newly-installed plate glass and contemporary finishes.

The appeal of the area is enhanced by a series of open courtyards for al fresco dining in four restaurants, which will offer a place to meet and linger over a coffee or something more substantial.

Shopping in North Bath is focused around Milsom Street, home to Jolly's, the oldest department store in the country. Contemporary additions include Reiss and Ted Baker, plus fashion and beauty specialists in New Bond Street such as Space NK and L.K. Bennett. Milsom Place sits at the heart of all this, close to the best shopping opportunities in the city.

The development also serves a practical need by providing improved linkages from west to east – as a city, Bath has tended to have a north/south orientation. From Milsom Street a series of pavements, shops and courtyards lead through to Broad Street.

Among the shops already operating on the Broad Street side of Milsom Place is Cath Kidston, whilst Hobbs has taken a

**Top left:** Milsom Place seamlessly blends old and new architecture with contemporary and traditional materials to stunning effect.

**Top right:** A new staircase, enclosed by plate glass, leads into the lower courtyard where Café Parisien continues to offer alfresco dining.

**Below:** The beautifully restored gates in the 18th century Octagon Chapel, which will become a distinctive retail space.

shop off Milsom Street. These join existing independents in Milsom Place like fashion retailers A.H.Modà and Image, and Quadri known for its distinctive gifts and the Alessi range.

The Moon & Sixpence, a well-known Bath restaurant, will double in size when it re-opens this summer. The opening of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's flagship Jamie's Italian restaurant in September is quite a coup for the development, and will attract media and public interest.

Ken Elliott, director of the developers, the L & R Group, says: "We are delighted with the way Milsom Place is shaping up. Anchoring the development, the Octagon Chapel will provide a distinctively different retail space which is both elegant and unique. There is nothing artificial about this environment; we have created a place with integrity, with character and style. This is what Bath does best.

"We are taking time to let the space to ensure we get the balance right. We are

looking for a combination of strong independents and well known names with well respected quality brands."

According to Jill Rayson, senior partner of architects DLG, their brief was "to handle the Grade I listed Octagon Building with great sensitivity and to open up access to this previously hidden part of the city, a secret part of Bath."

The Octagon Chapel was constructed in 1765 by banker William Street and the Reverend Dr Dechair, hoping for financial and spiritual gain respectively. The story of the chapel paints a cameo of life in 18th century Bath. It was well placed for custom from the Upper and Lower Towns and the extensive vaults beneath the chapel (to be converted into a restaurant in the new scheme) could be profitably let out for storage of wines and spirits. Designed in neo-classical style, the chapel had a continuous gallery supported by ionic columns and elaborate plasterwork. These features are all intact and have now been carefully restored.

Retailers are delighted with the stance taken by local architect Martin Blake, whose brief was to upgrade the existing retail space in Shires Yard. He has succeeded in "letting the detail and design of the Georgian buildings speak for themselves". Traditional materials like sawn pennant flagstones give continuity with the adjoining streets and exposed rubble stone add great character, while glass balustrades, brushed stainless steel and black American walnut handles provide a very contemporary feel. ■

For the latest news and event listings visit: [www.milsomplace.co.uk](http://www.milsomplace.co.uk)

